

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02142 151229Z
ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 INR-10 INRE-00 NEA-10
NSCE-00 CIAE-00 SSO-00 /052 W
-----034559 151306Z /50S

O P 151127Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7637
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2142

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, SREF, LE, IS
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: RETURN OF REFUGEES

REF: JERUSALEM 1071

1. LEBANESE MILITARY COORDINATOR OF RETURN-TO-VILLAGE
CONTACTED EMBASSY ON APRIL 15 WITH UP-DATE ON OPERATION.
PROBLEMS OF NOON CLOSING OF IDF CHECKPOINT NEAR BAZOURIYE
APPARENTLY RESOLVED, BUT MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM HAS EMERGED,
THAT OF EXTENSIVE CLEARANCE FORMALITIES. LEBANESE MIL
COORDINATOR CLAIMS THAT DURING PAST 36 HOURS OFFICIAL
LEBANESE CONVOYS HAVE BEEN REQUIRED BY IDF TO OVERNIGHT
WITH PEOPLE STAYING IN BUSES OR IN OPEN WITHOUT FACILITIES
FOR COOKING OR COMFORT. GOL COORDINATOR CONTEMPLATING
RECOMMENDATION THAT OFFICIAL PROGRAM BE SUSPENDED UNLESS
SOME CLARIFICATION RECEIVED ON PROCEDURES.

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 02142 151229Z

2. HE REQUESTED OUR GOOD OFFICES ON FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

A. DOES IDF ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS TO RETURN TO VILLAGES?

B. ARE THERE PRIOR PREPARATIONS GOL CAN TAKE TO FACILITATE
CHECK-POINT PROCESSING FOR OFFICIAL CONVOYS?

C. WILL IDF AFFORD PRIORITY TO OFFICIAL CONVOYS,
APPROPRIATELY IDENTIFIED (SEE BELOW)?

3. ON APRIL 14, SOUTH LEBANON GOVERNOR REPORTED PRIOR
DAY'S CONVOY REQUIRED OVERNIGHT IN NO-MAN'S LAND BETWEEN
IDF AND UNIFIL CHECK-POINTS NEAR BAZOURIYE, WHEN IDF CLOSED
ITS CHECK-POINT. DESPITE ENTREATIES BY LRC REP. TO ALLOW
BUSES PROCEED OR RETURN, IDF REPORTEDLY CLOSED DOWN AND
DID NOT ALLOW CONVOY TO MOVE IN EITHER DIRECTION.

4. WITH INCREASING TEMPO OF RETURNS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO
CLARIFY THIS SITUATION. GOL HAS PROCESSED OVER 1,400
FAMILIES (APPROX. 10,000 PERSONS BY THEIR ESTIMATE) AND
CALCULATES PRIVATE RETURNS APPROACH SAME NUMBER. IN CAS OF
LATTER, MANY HAVE TEMPORARILY GONE BACK TO TYRE BECAUSE IDF
PREVENTED THEM FROM ENTERING ITS ZONE OF CONTROL AND RETURNED
FOLLOWING DAY, WHICH ONLY COMPLICATES CHECK-POINT SITUATION
FURTHER.

5. AS CONCERNS CONDITIONS IN VILLAGES, GOVERNOR PRINCIPALLY
CONCERNED WITH WATER AND ELECTRICITY, ON WHICH LITTLE OR NO
DATA AVAILABLE. INQUIRY THROUGH ICRC TO ARRANGE FOR ENGINEER
TO VISIT TAIBE AND REVIEW MAJOR WATER SOURCE AND EQUIPMENT
LED TO IDF RESPONSE THAT GOL ARMY SHOULD PUT FORMAL REQUEST
THROUGH ILMAC. WOULD HELP OUR EFFORTS IF WE COULD HAVE
ANY GENERAL INFORMATION ON LOCAL WATER AND POWER SITUATIONS,
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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 02142 151229Z

PARTICULARLY IN CAZAS OF TYRE, BINT JBEIL AND MARJAYOUN.

6. URGENT THAT WE BE ABLE ADVISE GOL ON POINTS RAISED PARA
2 ABOVE. NOW THAT GOL HAS FINALLY CRANKED UP MACHINERY
FOR RETURN OF REFUGEES, IT WOULD BE INDEED UNFORTUNATE IF HAVE
TO SHUT DOWN. WE REALIZE DIFFICULTY IDF FACES IN BALANCING
OUT SECURITY VERSUS HUMANITARIAN ISSUES; HOWEVER,
PRESSURE ON GOL IS EQUALLY INTENSE AND FULL COOPERATION OF
IDF IS NEEDED IF REFUGEE PROBLEM IS TO BE SOLVED. PARKER

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